

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Interagency Council on Homelessness



Notes from the Meeting of the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)

Date and Time: November 3, 2009; 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Location: Miriam's Kitchen, 2401 Virginia Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20037

Approximate Attendance: 97

Welcome and Introductions

Neil O. Albert, City Administrator (CA), called the meeting to order and then opened the meeting for comments from the public.

Public Comment Period

There was a public comment period, but this reporter was not present

Summary of the Discussion from the Pre-Meeting Focus Groups-Schroeder Stribling, Deputy Executive Director, N Street Village

- A focus group (round table) was held prior to the ICH meeting so that key issues could be discussed in detail by members of the homeless community with the findings or conclusions of the discussions presented at the subsequent ICH meeting. This input is sought in order to inform the planning process of the ICH and its committees. More than 30 individuals participated in this session.
- Participants were asked to reflect on specific questions or topics and to offer their input and perspectives through both small group conversations and in written comments. These questions were discussed:

Topic: Downtown Services

1. The community has articulated a need for meals and services for individuals who are homeless in the downtown area. In the absence of a downtown service center, how can the community improve access to programs?
2. What do you see as barriers to access to existing programs and services?
 - A few themes that emerged from the conversations about Downtown Services were:
 - Transportation for Medicaid recipients and more accessible vehicles for persons with disabilities are needed.
 - Additional information on local resources in the area would be helpful.
 - Incentives tied to resources would yield ownership in recovery
 - There is a need to increase the accessibility of current programs and services

- Additional drug outpatient treatment, mental health programs, and job training programs are needed.

Topic: Shelter Intake

1. Currently, individuals who want to stay in the low barrier shelters must line up and then pass through a security check before being admitted. The security check at intake is important for the safety and well being of all who use and work in the shelters, but it can cause delays in intake at times. What can we do to improve intake at the shelters so that persons will not have to wait for a long time, especially in bad weather?
 - A few themes that emerged from the conversations about Shelter Intake were:
 - Implementation of staggered entry is needed so that people who were there the night before are able to enter the shelter early.
 - Provide lockers in front of the shelter or a secure checkroom for bags and belongings.
 - Each shelter needs to be equipped with a canopy in the front to provide protection for those who are waiting outside in bad weather.
- Each question was discussed in facilitated sub-groups, and summaries of the conversations, input, and ideas generated were provided by each group. Schroeder Stribling, Deputy Executive Director, N Street Village, gave a summary of the results of the discussions to the assembled ICH, and a written summary is also available.

ICH Committee Reports

Steering Committee-Scott McNeilly, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless (WLCH)

- It was announced that the next meeting for the ICH Steering Committee was to be held on November 19, 2009; the goal of the Steering Committee is to ensure that all upcoming 2010 ICH meeting dates and sites are set prior to the next ICH meeting on January 12, 2010.

Operations and Logistics Committee- Chapman Todd, Catholic Charities

- At the last ICH meeting the winter plan passed, however there was concern regarding the number of overflow beds that are available this year, in order to remedy these concerns La Casa was added as a hypothermia facility.
- This committee continues to study discharge planning, and the intention is to focus on the health and safety issues involved by examining discharges from jails, prisons and hospitals. One goal is to find ways and means to keep individuals from moving from one institution (e.g., corrections or a hospital) to another, such as the shelter system. The DC Hospital Association (DCHA), the Department of Corrections (DOC), the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), and the Criminal Justice Coordination Council (CJCC) are among organizations and agencies involved in this effort.

Strategic Planning-Clarence Carter, Director, DHS

- It was announced that this committee will be co-chaired by Laura Zeilinger and Kelly Sweeney McShane; the next meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2009 in which the committee will resume its work on composing the Strategic Plan to End Homelessness.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Budget Update-Laura Zeilinger (DHS), Sue Marshall, The Community Partnership (TCP)

- Laura Zeilinger announced that as a result of recent budget cutbacks, DHS is required to revisit all operating budgets of its current homeless providers. DHS plans to maintain all essential services.
- Sue Marshall reported TCP met with 80% of the homeless providers that received funding from the District to revisit their operating budgets. The remaining providers will be contacted on the upcoming week.

Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) Updates: Procurements and Program Implementation

- The District was awarded \$7.3 million for the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place between the Department of Human Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development (totaling \$6.6 million) for **Homeless Prevention and Counseling and Search Assistance**.
- To date, DHS has put out 2 Request for Applications (RFAs); both programs are on track to be operating by December 1, 2009.

Public Comment Period

- There was a comment made that the representatives from the National Park Police should be asked to regularly attend ICH meetings because of the high number of homeless that frequent park property.
- A speaker informed meeting attendees that there has not been hot water at the NY Avenue shelter for a month. Mr. Albert advised the speaker that hot water will be available at the NY Avenue shelter by Close of Business (COB) 11/3/09. In addition, Mr. Albert requested that a plan is implemented to respond to maintenance issues at shelters, and that a representative from The Community Partnership (TCP) present this new plan at the next ICH meeting (January 12, 2010).
- Concerns were raised in regard to the suspension of homeless services on the weekends; the speaker was informed that homeless services are still provided on the weekends.